

POST-OPERATIVE REHABILITATION PROTOCOL

# Shoulder SLAP Repair

William McLaughlin, MD | Sports Medicine Surgery | Advanced Bone & Joint

## Phase 1 | 0-1 Week

### GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Patient performs home exercises: pendulums, elbow ROM, wrist ROM, grip strengthening.

### Home Exercises

- Pendulums.
- Elbow range of motion.
- Wrist range of motion.
- Grip strengthening.

## Phase 2 | 1-4 Weeks

### GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Sling for 4 weeks.
- ROM to 90° forward flexion and 40° external rotation at side.
- Avoid internal rotation up the back and external rotation behind the head.
- Avoid resisted forward flexion or biceps resistance until 6 weeks post-op (protect biceps root).

### Immobilization

- Sling for 4 weeks.

### Precautions

- No internal rotation up the back.
- No external rotation behind the head.
- No resisted forward flexion or biceps resistance until 6 weeks post-op to avoid stressing biceps root.

### Range of Motion Goals

- 90° of forward flexion.
- 40° external rotation at the side.

### Modalities

- Heat before / ice after PT sessions.

## Phase 3 | 4-8 Weeks

### GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Discontinue sling.
- Increase AROM to 140° FF, 40° ER at side, 60° abduction, IR behind back to waist.
- Begin strengthening (isometrics / light bands) within AROM limits.
- Begin scapular stabilizer strengthening.

### Immobilization

- Discontinue sling.

### Range of Motion

- Increase AROM to 140° forward flexion, 40° external rotation at side, 60° abduction, internal rotation behind back to waist.

### Strengthening

- Strengthening (isometrics / light bands) within active ROM limitations.
- Begin strengthening scapular stabilizers (trapezius, rhomboid, levator scapulae).

### Modalities

- Physical modalities per PT discretion.

## Phase 4 | 8-12 Weeks

### GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Restore full ROM with gentle passive stretching at end ranges if needed.
- Advance strengthening to isometrics and bands with light weights (1-5 lbs).

### Range of Motion

- If ROM lacking, increase to full with gentle passive stretching at end ranges.

### Strengthening

- Advance strengthening as tolerated — isometrics and bands with light weights (1-5 lbs).
- 8-12 reps / 2-3 sets per rotator cuff, deltoid, and scapular stabilizers.

## Phase 5 | 3-12 Months

### GOALS FOR THIS PHASE

- Limit strengthening to 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendinitis.
- Add upper-extremity ergometer, eccentrics, plyometrics, proprioception, and closed-chain at 12 weeks.
- Sports-related rehab at 3 months; throwing at 4.5 months; pitcher's mound at 6 months.
- MMI usually at 12 months.

### Strengthening & Conditioning

- Strengthening 3x/week to avoid rotator cuff tendinitis.
- Begin upper-extremity ergometer.
- Begin eccentrically resisted motions, plyometrics (weighted ball toss), proprioception (body blade), and closed-chain exercises at 12 weeks.

### Return to Sport Milestones

- Sports-related rehab at 3 months, including advanced conditioning.
- Return to throwing at 4.5 months.
- Throw from pitcher's mound at 6 months.
- MMI usually at 12 months.

### Note

- May require functional sports assessment at 5-6 months following surgery for clearance to return to sport.

*This protocol is a general guideline. Progression is patient-specific and at the discretion of William McLaughlin, MD.*